DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 479 961 UD 035 845

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TITLE	America's Newcomers.
PUB DATE	2003-06-18
NOTE	17p.; Produced by the University at Albany, Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research.
AVAILABLE FROM	Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research, University at Albany, Business Administration B-10, Albany, NY 12222. Tel: 518-442-4656; Fax: 518-442-3380; e-mail: mumford@castle.albany.edu; Web site: http://www.albany.edu/mumford.
PUB TYPE	Numerical/Quantitative Data (110) -- Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	EDRS Price MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	English (Second Language); Ethnic Distribution; *Immigrants; *Immigration; Language Usage; Neighborhoods; *Population Trends; Racial Differences; Social Class; *Socioeconomic Status; Statistical Data; Suburbs; Urban Areas
IDENTIFIERS	Census 1990; Census 2000

ABSTRACT

This paper uses data from the 1990 and 2000 Census of Population and the Census 2000 Supplemental Survey to examine how U.S. cities are being reshaped by immigration. Overall, immigrants have a similar socioeconomic profile to that of persons of the same race/ethnicity born in the United States. Among African Americans, immigrants are doing better than natives. Among all groups, immigrants have a lower unemployment rate. Immigration is unevenly distributed nationwide. Just 13 metropolitan regions, including New York, New York; Los Angeles, California; Chicago, Illinois; and San Francisco, California house more than half of the foreign-born population. Immigrant growth in the suburbs far surpasses growth in central cities. Immigrants typically live in neighborhoods where about 30 percent of the residents are immigrants and an even higher share of neighbors speak a language other than English at home. There are only small differences in other characteristics of neighborhoods where immigrants live, compared to natives of the same racial or ethnic group. Appended is a list of metropolitan regions that have more than ten percent foreign-born residents. (SM)

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America's Newcomers

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June 18, 2003

This report is based on data from the 1990 and 2000 Census of Population and the Census 2000 Supplemental Survey, analyzed by Mumford Center researchers Hyoung-jin Shin and Jacob Stowell.

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The American metropolis is once again being reshaped by immigration. The 2000 Census counted nearly 29 million immigrants living in metropolitan regions throughout the United States, up by 10 million since 1990. This report summarizes what has been learned up to now from Census 2000 about these American Newcomers. The major findings:

- Immigrants have a similar socioeconomic profile to that of persons of the same race/ethnicity born in the U.S. Among blacks they are doing better than natives. Among all groups they have a lower unemployment rate.

- Immigration is unevenly distributed around the country. Just 13 metropolitan regions including New York, Los Angeles, Chicago, and the San Francisco Bay Area house more than half the foreign-born population; most areas still have less than 10% foreign-born.

- Immigrant growth in the suburbs (4.8 million increase) far surpasses growth in central cities (3.5 million increase).

- Immigrants typically live in neighborhoods where about 30% of residents are immigrants and an even higher share of neighbors speak a language other than English at home.

- There are only small differences in other characteristics of neighborhoods where immigrants live, compared to natives of the same racial or ethnic group.

Additional information on specific metropolitan areas can be found in webpages developed by the Mumford Center. For data on the numbers of foreign-born persons, immigrants who arrived in the 1990-2000 decade, and persons who speak a language other than English at home, see the New Americans pages: http://mumford1.dyndns.org/cen2000/NewAmericans/namericans.htm.

For data on immigration by race and Hispanic origin and information about the neighborhoods where these people live, see the Separate and Unequal pages: http://mumford1.dyndns.org/cen2000/SepUneq/PublicSeparateUnequal.htm.

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Social and economic characteristics of immigrants and natives

Immigrants are typically thought of as relatively poor newcomers who often sacrifice so that their children will have the opportunity to succeed in this country. However this perception is colored by the fact that immigrants are largely members of minority groups, especially Hispanics who have less than average income and education even among those born in the U.S.

Data from a large-scale survey (the Census 2000 Supplemental Survey) conducted as part of Census 2000 provide solid information about how immigrants actually compare to native-born members of the same racial or ethnic group. Results are shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Socioeconomic Characteristics of Major Race and Ethnic Groups by Nativity, 2000

		U.S. Citizen	Speak only English	Years of Education	Median Household Income	Unemployed	Below Poverty
White	Native	100.0%	96.5%	13.5	$52,000	3.9%	8.5%
	Immigrant	60.8%	43.9%	13.4	$51,000	3.7%	11.4%
Black	Native	100.0%	97.5%	12.5	$33,200	10.0%	24.4%
	Immigrant	46.9%	57.8%	13.2	$42,000	6.5%	15.9%
Hispanic	Native	100.0%	35.3%	12.1	$38,000	8.3%	21.7%
	Immigrant	28.4%	4.3%	9.7	$37,200	5.8%	22.0%
Asian	Native	100.0%	60.2%	14.5	$67,000	5.9%	10.4%
	Immigrant	52.3%	12.7%	13.8	$62,500	4.5%	12.7%

The first two columns deal with citizenship and language usage, characteristics that naturally distinguish immigrants from natives. It is interesting to see that even here the differences among racial and ethnic groups are almost as great as those between immigrants and natives.

- By definition native-born persons are citizens. The share of immigrants who are citizens ranges from less than 30% for Hispanics to over 60% for whites. This difference in part reflects timing of immigration, since many white immigrants came to the U.S. more than thirty years ago, while immigration by other groups surged in the 1980s and 1990s.

- Within every racial/ethnic category, persons born in the U.S. are much more likely than those born abroad to speak only English at home. At the extremes, this includes only 4.3% of Hispanic immigrants and 12.7% of Asian immigrants. But there are correspondingly low figures even for Hispanics and Asians born here (35.3% and 60.2% respectively). Black immigrants are much more likely to be English-speakers, reflecting the origin of many of them in former British colonies in the Caribbean.

The other data in the table reflect how well different groups are faring in the U.S. Here what is striking is that the differences between immigrants and natives are very modest.

- Among non-Hispanic whites, for example, the only appreciable difference is in the percent below poverty, but immigrants are within 0.1 year of having the same education level, within $1000 in median income, and within 0.2% of the same unemployment level. White immigrants are very successful compared to blacks or Hispanics, and only slightly below white natives.

- Among blacks, immigrants have a surprising edge over those born in the U.S. – higher education and income, and a substantially lower percentage unemployed or below the poverty line.

- Among Hispanics, immigrants have substantially lower education than natives (this is measured for persons aged 25 and over). But the differences in income and poverty rate are negligible, and immigrants are less likely to be unemployed.

- Asian immigrants have remarkably high income and education, as well as low poverty rates, but nonetheless they are not doing as well as Asians born in the U.S. in these dimensions. However, like Hispanic immigrants they are less likely to be unemployed than their U.S.-born counterparts.

In short there are substantial effects of immigration on citizenship and language use, but relatively small and inconsistent differences in education and economic standing. While it is true that a majority of immigrants in this country are less educated and less affluent than the national average, this results from the large share of Hispanics among immigrants. Within ethnic categories, immigration has smaller effects than one would expect.

The uneven growth of the immigrant population in metropolitan America

Today the story of immigration is primarily about cities and suburbs – especially suburbs. Some immigrants are also found in rural America, but unlike the middle of the 19th Century, when farming communities were a primary destination for immigrants, only about 10% of foreign-born Americans now live in rural areas. And unlike the early 20th Century, when they clustered in enclaves in the central cities, the major growth now is in the suburbs.

The growth of the immigrant population in metropolitan areas is enumerated in Table 2. The sources of data here and in subsequent tables are the summary files for Census 1990 and 2000. The table shows the number of U.S.-born and foreign-born persons in each major racial/ethnic category who lived within a metropolitan region in both 1990 and 2000. The percentage of residents born abroad increased from 9.5% in 1990 to 13.0% in 2000. More than 40% of Hispanics and about two-thirds of Asians are immigrants.

Another way to see these figures is to notice that about 40% of the growth in the metropolitan population in the last decade was due to the increase in the number of foreign-born persons.

Despite this spectacular growth overall, immigrants are spread very unevenly around the country, and very large sections of the United States still are relatively untouched by immigration. There are many metropolitan areas where immigrants are notably missing. Among the 50 largest metros, nine have less than 5% immigrants among their residents. These include six in the Midwest: Cincinnati and Pittsburgh (both only 2.6% immigrant), St. Louis, Indianapolis, Kansas City, and Columbus. The other three are in the South: Norfolk, Nashville, and New Orleans.

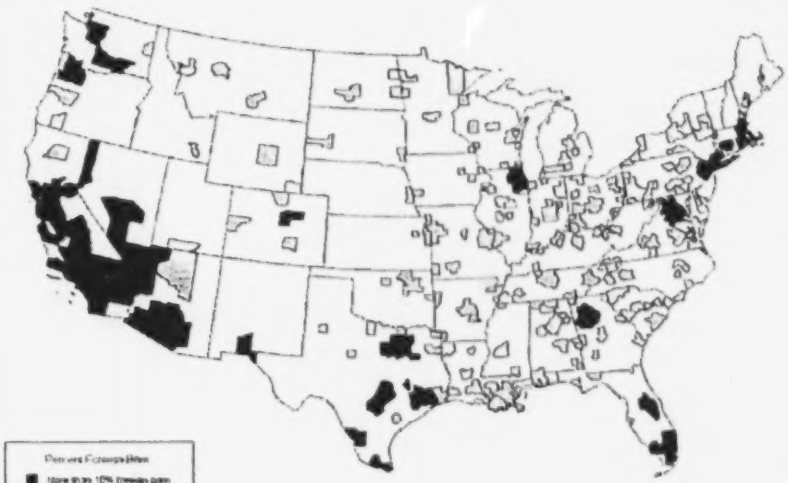
Table 2. Native and immigrant populations in metropolitan areas

	Total		U.S.-born		Foreign-born	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
White	145,233,383	149,091,035	139,472,419	142,682,117	5,751,303	6,408,918
			96.0%	95.7%	4.0%	4.3%
Black	24,930,677	30,379,161	23,691,763	28,994,746	1,170,685	1,384,415
			95.0%	95.4%	4.7%	4.6%
Hispanic	20,467,541	32,170,919	12,835,653	19,003,663	7,571,895	13,167,256
			62.7%	59.1%	37.0%	40.9%
Asian	6,870,137	11,647,649	2,411,827	3,769,745	4,352,711	7,877,904
			35.1%	32.4%	63.4%	67.6%
Total	198,391,586	225,981,711	179,601,145	196,614,669	18,790,948	29,367,042
			90.5%	87.0%	9.5%	13.0%

These seem like exceptional places in the context of the national averages. But they are not alone. Indeed one might just as well argue that areas with concentrated immigration are the exception, because so much of the country is more like Cincinnati than like Los Angeles. There are 262 metropolitan regions (out of 331 in the nation) where immigrants are still below 10% of the population. In the areas, with a population of 115.7 million, only 5.7 million were born abroad – actually less than 5%.

The map of the continental United States in Figure 1 identifies the location of metropolitan regions where immigrants are plentiful (over 10% of the population) or scarce (under 5%). The sections with few immigrants cover most of the Midwest and Mississippi Valley. Sections with many immigrants are concentrated along the East Coast, the Southeast, the Southwest, and West Coast.

Figure 1. Metropolitan regions where more than 10% or less than 5% of residents are foreign-born, 2000



In effect there are two very different American situations. In some areas immigration has reached record levels. In others it is only a trickle. These latter places have not been entirely untouched. For example, Nashville had very few immigrant residents in 1990, only 18,000, but this number tripled during the decade and grew from 1.8% to 4.7% of the total. Still, places like this (and many other places with much smaller population change) have been largely shielded from the influx of newcomers that is so large a factor in social relations, the economy, and politics in the country as a whole.

Major destinations of metropolitan immigrants

Immigrants are found in every part of the country, but just 13 metropolitan areas, which together have a quarter of the U.S. population, house more than half the immigrants. These locations are listed in Table 3, which gives the 1990 and 2000 numbers of immigrants in each one, along with the percentage of the total population that is foreign-born. Reviewing these one at a time, we notice not only the scale of immigration but also the diversity of origins and the variations across the country in where the newcomers are from.

Los Angeles, by virtue of its size and location near the Mexican border and the Pacific Ocean, claims the largest foreign-born population with 3.4 million. By far the largest number – more than 2 million – is Latino, especially Mexicans. This is more than double the number of Latino immigrants in any other location. Los Angeles also has the largest number of Asian immigrants, nearly 900,000. Many of its 400,000 white immigrants are from Iran rather than Europe. Los

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Angeles continued to experience massive immigration in the 1990's, but nevertheless it has been losing ground to other areas. In 1990 it was the home of 15.4% of the total metropolitan foreign-born population, but by 2000 its share had dropped to 11.7%. Part of the shift is a trend that had already begun in the 1980's, migration of Hispanic immigrants from Los Angeles to nearby areas, including Orange County, Riverside-San Bernardino, and San Diego. These areas are also among the ten in the nation with the highest number of foreign-born. Counting Los Angeles, these four Southern California metros are the home of fully 19% of America's foreign-born residents.

Table 3. Metropolitan regions with the largest numbers of immigrants in 2000

	Immigrants		Share of population	
	2000	1990	2000	1990
1 Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	3,449,444	2,892,456	36.2%	32.7%
2 New York, NY	3,139,647	2,285,024	33.7%	26.8%
3 Chicago, IL	1,425,978	885,081	17.2%	11.9%
4 Miami, FL	1,147,765	874,569	50.9%	45.1%
5 Houston, TX	854,669	440,321	20.5%	13.3%
6 Orange County, CA	849,899	575,108	29.9%	23.9%
7 Washington, DC	832,016	489,641	16.9%	11.6%
8 Riverside-San Bernardino, CA	612,359	360,643	18.8%	13.9%
9 San Diego, CA	606,254	428,810	21.5%	17.2%
10 Dallas, TX	591,169	234,522	16.8%	8.8%
11 Oakland, CA	573,144	337,435	24.0%	16.2%
12 San Jose, CA	573,130	347,201	34.1%	23.2%
13 San Francisco, CA	554,819	441,290	32.0%	27.5%

New York is the other great immigrant metropolis. It has nearly as many immigrants as Los Angeles (3.1 million), this population is growing faster (up about 40% in the last decade), and it has more diverse origins. While New York is second to Los Angeles in the number of Hispanic and Asian immigrants, it nearly makes up the difference as the nation's major destination for white immigrants from Europe and the Middle East (nearly 750,000) and black immigrants from the Caribbean and Africa (over 500,000). It draws far fewer Mexicans than is common in the Southwest. Instead it has a distinctive mix of Dominicans, Central Americans, and South Americans, groups who generally live in or near New York's large Puerto Rican neighborhoods. And it has over 700,000 Asians, including especially large numbers of people from China and India. Together with Newark and the surrounding suburbs in New York and Northern New Jersey, Greater New York accounts for 16% of America's immigrants.

Chicago is the only major destination for immigrants in the Midwest. Only about one in six Chicagoans is foreign-born, compared to more than a third of residents of the New York and Los Angeles metropolitan regions. But its nearly 1.5 million immigrant residents place it third in the nation, up from about 900,000 in 1990. Chicago has an old reputation for immigration from Eastern Europe, and indeed over 400,000 of its foreign-born residents are non-Hispanic whites. But the largest number, close to 700,000, are Hispanic, and of these most are Mexican. Another 300,000 are Asian.

Miami, famous for its Cuban minority, has over 1.1 million immigrants. The vast majority, over 900,000, are Latinos, with growing numbers of Salvadorans and Nicaraguans to augment the Cuban population. Nearly 100,000 of these immigrants are black, about equally from Haiti and the English-speaking Afro-Caribbean nations. These combine with Fort Lauderdale's black immigrants to create a strong Afro-Caribbean presence in South Florida.

Houston (850,000) and Dallas (nearly 600,000) are both counted among the top ten in number of immigrants. Neither metropolis has historically had a very large Hispanic minority, compared to areas closer to the Mexican border, but their Hispanic immigrant populations both more than doubled in the last decade. Besides Mexicans, Houston has become one of the major destinations for Salvadoran immigrants in the U.S. Additionally, both of these metro areas now have over 100,000 Asian immigrants, more than doubling since 1990.

The nation's capital, Washington, D.C., completes the list of top ten immigrant destinations with 832,000 immigrants. It is like New York in the racial diversity of immigrants, including nearly equal shares of Asians and Hispanics along with a significant minority of white and black immigrants.

Three additional metropolitan regions have more than 550,000 immigrants, all in the San Francisco Bay Area – Oakland, San Jose, and San Francisco. Taken together, they have about the same number of immigrants as Chicago, or Miami and Fort Lauderdale combined. Like the rest of California, the Bay Area has few black immigrants. Unlike the rest of the state, the largest immigrant group here is Asian, with a total of more than 900,000, compared to over 500,000 Hispanics and close to 300,000 whites.

Including these 13 metros, there are 69 metropolises around the country where at least 10% of the population is immigrant. These are the home of almost 24 million immigrants, four-fifths of the metropolitan total. Analyses in the following sections will focus on immigrants in these 69 areas, listed in the Appendix Table.

Growth in the cities, and also in suburbia

The impact of the foreign-born on these metropolitan regions has been great, especially the contribution of immigration to their growth in the last ten years. Table 4 shows that the total increase of population in these metros was about 16.5 million persons, split almost exactly between natives and immigrants. In some major metropolitan regions there would even have been a population loss except for immigration. In the New York metropolis, for example, the U.S.-born population dropped by about 80,000, while the number of foreign-born persons jumped by 850,000. The number of white natives dropped even more, by nearly 450,000, and there were few new white immigrants. In this case the region would have lost population if not for growth in the number of black, Hispanic, and Asian immigrants.

The table shows that loss in the number of U.S.-born whites was typical of these central cities during the 1990's, only partly outweighed by white immigration. The black population of these immigrant-intensive metros grew more substantially, and this group's surge was mainly due to its growing U.S.-born component. But the big gainers were Hispanics, up more than 9 million,

and Asians, up 3.5 million in these 69 metros. Half of the Hispanic growth and about three-quarters of the Asian growth was due to immigrants.

Table 4. Population growth in 69 metros, 1990-2000.

		Total growth	City growth	Suburb growth
White	All persons	210,924	-1,239,196	1,450,120
	Native	-265,553	-1,362,654	1,097,101
	Immigrant	481,147	127,319	353,828
Black	All persons	2,561,516	455,270	2,106,246
	Native	2,496,619	489,147	2,007,472
	Immigrant	93,295	-23,559	116,854
Hispanic	All persons	9,219,015	3,945,188	5,273,827
	Native	4,705,921	1,944,153	2,761,768
	Immigrant	4,523,844	2,007,094	2,516,750
Asian	All persons	3,550,647	1,381,287	2,169,360
	Native	975,207	386,409	588,798
	Immigrant	2,609,701	1,013,067	1,596,634
All groups	All persons	16,520,069	4,963,910	11,556,159
	Native	8,262,612	1,510,060	6,752,552
	Immigrant	8,257,668	3,453,809	4,803,859

Historically immigration – especially immigration by newer minority groups – was a city-centered process. Table 4 provides strong evidence that immigrants are now a major contributor to suburbanization. Of the 11.5 million-person growth in the number of suburbanites in these metro areas, 4.8 million was due to immigrants. Their role varied greatly by race and ethnicity, however.

- Among whites, there was a substantial drop in the city population – entirely due to loss of white natives – and a shift to the suburbs, continuing a pattern that began decades earlier.

- The black population also shifted toward suburbia. In this case it was the immigrants who declined in cities, but gained in suburbs.

- Hispanics and Asians experienced much more balanced growth. For both of these groups, and for both their U.S.-born and foreign-born members, there was considerable growth in the cities, but even stronger increase in suburbs.

Indeed, the nation's three all-suburban metropolises are among the top 30 in number and share of immigrants: Long Island, NY (the Nassau-Suffolk metropolis, 14.4% immigrant), Bergen-Passaic, NJ (25.7% immigrant), and Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ (20.8% immigrant). Many new immigrants now move directly to homes in suburban areas, where they join growing

clusters of newcomers from the same racial or ethnic group in the kinds of ethnic neighborhoods that used to be associated mainly with cities.

Formation of immigrant neighborhoods

How should we interpret the formation of immigrant ethnic neighborhoods? Neighborhoods have an important function for new arrivals, especially for people whose customs or language set them apart from the majority population. A long-established line of thought holds that concentrated immigrant settlement areas arise and are maintained because they meet newcomers' needs for affordable housing, family ties, a familiar culture, and help in finding work. Scholars note that immigrants' limited market resources and ethnically bound cultural and social capital are mutually reinforcing; they work in tandem to sustain ethnic neighborhoods. But these are typically viewed as transitional neighborhoods. They represent a practical and temporary phase in the incorporation of new groups into American society. Their residents search for areas with more amenities as soon as their economic situations improve, their outlooks broaden, and they learn to navigate daily life in a more mainstream setting. People with more financial resources and mainstream jobs avoid ethnic zones, and these areas are left behind by immigrants with more experience and by the second generation in search of the "Promised Land."

Such neighborhoods can be thought of as *immigrant enclaves*. But they are not the only form of immigrant neighborhood. The contemporary immigration stream is quite diverse and includes many immigrants with high levels of human capital who find professional or other high-status positions in the United States. As a result, some groups are now able to establish enclaves in desirable locations, often in suburbia, as reflected in the previous section. Group members may choose these locations even when spatial assimilation is feasible. For some, the ethnic neighborhood may be a favored destination, not just a starting point. The term *ethnic community* is a way to denote ethnic neighborhoods that are selected as living environments by those who have wider options based on their market resources.

We find that in fact immigrants tend to live in neighborhoods that are very much like those of other members of the same racial or ethnic group. This means, for example, that Hispanic immigrants are more likely to live in places that look like traditional immigrant enclaves, while Asian immigrants tend to live in much more favorable circumstances.

The following tables provide information about the neighborhoods where the average group member lives: the average white, the average white native, the average white foreign-born person, etc. These are weighted averages across all 69 immigrant-intensive metros, and they count more heavily the situation in metropolitan regions with more persons in a particular category.

Table 5 provides information on the immigration-related characteristics of neighborhoods: the percent foreign-born and the percent of persons (over 5 years old) who speak a language other than English in their home. These variables give the answer to several questions about immigrants' residential patterns. First, how is immigration changing the <u>average</u> neighborhood in these metropolises? Second, how different are the neighborhoods where natives and immigrants live? This tells us about the degree of integration or separation between these groups. Third, how do differences between natives and immigrants fit into the racial and ethnic boundaries across neighborhoods? Commentators have pointed out that Asians and Hispanics,

who have particularly large shares of foreign-born members, may be establishing separate neighborhoods for this reason – but perhaps their U.S.-born members live in areas much more similar to those of white natives.

Table 5. Characteristics of neighborhoods where the average group member lived

		Total		Native		Immigrant	
		1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Foreign-born percent	**White**	12.4	15.7	11.9	15	20.4	25.4
	Black	15.1	20.3	13.8	19.1	28.8	33.1
	Hispanic	28.2	32	23.3	28	35.4	37.2
	Asian	25.6	30.1	21.4	26.4	28	31.9
Percent other language	**White**	18.5	23.1	17.9	22.2	27.8	34.2
	Black	21.5	27.6	20.6	27.3	29.4	30.1
	Hispanic	49.4	53.6	45.8	50.3	54.8	58
	Asian	35.5	41.2	31.1	37.3	38	43

Let's begin with neighborhoods where the average white or black resident lives in these metropolitan regions. The average white lives in census tracts where about 15% of neighbors are foreign-born and just under a quarter speak another language at home. To put these figures in perspective, if we count whites in all metros, only 9% of their neighbors are immigrants and only 14% speak another language at home. So we might think of Table 5 as evidence that in some parts of the country whites have at least a moderate exposure to immigration, and clearly this exposure is growing. Blacks live in neighborhoods with somewhat higher levels of newcomers.

Hispanics' and Asians' neighborhoods are markedly different – nearly a third of the average Hispanic or Asian person's neighbors are immigrants, and around half are bilingual.

One reason why Hispanics and Asians have greater exposure to newcomers is because larger shares of them are immigrants themselves. How different are the census tracts where immigrants live from those of natives? Among whites the differences are very large – foreign-born whites live in neighborhoods with a 10% larger share of immigrants and a 12% larger share of bilingual persons than do native whites. To varying degrees the same pattern is found for every group.

But this is not the only reason. Race and ethnicity also make a difference. Whether we look at natives or immigrants, Hispanics are the most likely to live in immigrant neighborhoods, followed by blacks and Asians, and whites are least likely. Hispanics' linguistic isolation – living among people who speak another language at home – is also by far the highest, regardless of whether we compare native or immigrant group members. Asian linguistic isolation is intermediate. White and black linguistic isolation is lowest.

Several factors converge to make Hispanics stand out so strongly from the other groups. They are a very large minority, and they form large Hispanic enclaves in the metropolitan regions where they are most concentrated. For example, in the Los Angeles metropolis about 45% of the

population is Hispanic, and the average group member is in a neighborhood that is 63% Hispanic. Half of them are immigrants, and even in the second and third generation a large share continue to speak both English and Spanish. The immigrant experience and bilingualism are very much the norm in their neighborhoods.

Asians have an even higher share of immigrants than do Hispanics, and certainly this shows up in the composition of their neighborhoods. But other factors counterbalance this effect to some degree. First, they are a smaller group – for example, 12% of the population in Los Angeles, where they have the largest absolute number. Second, they tend to separate themselves from the black and Hispanic populations and in most metro areas – with the exception of very few distinct Chinatowns – they live in neighborhoods where Asians are over-represented but still well less than half of the residents.

Segregation from whites or spatial assimilation of the 2nd generation?

Social scientists have long been aware of the formation of immigrant enclaves, based on the experiences of white ethnic groups who entered the United States from about 1850 through 1920. Immigrants from Italy and East European Jews were especially likely to live in separate neighborhoods, separate both from one another and from more established whites. The most popular view is that this was a temporary phenomenon, and that by the second generation there would be a substantial shift to less segregated, more mainstream locations, a process described as spatial assimilation.

Table 6 assesses immigrants' settlement pattern in terms of exposure to the white majority. Let us focus first on the data for 2000, and compare the percent non-Hispanic white in the average person's neighborhood between the native-born and immigrants. There is only a modest difference among whites, blacks, and Hispanics, with the immigrant generation living in neighborhoods with a 3-5% lower white share than natives of the same race or ethnicity. There is no difference among Asians.

Table 6. Percent white in the neighborhoods of the average group member

	Total		Native		Foreign	
	1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
White	78.8	71.9	79.0	72.3	75.1	67.0
Black	27.1	25.7	26.9	26.0	27.8	22.7
Hispanic	37.7	31.6	40.5	34.1	33.6	28.4
Asian	52.2	45.6	51.2	45.3	52.8	45.8

"Spatial assimilation" measured this way seems to be much more a matter of people's race and ethnicity, rather than their nativity. Whites, regardless of country of birth, live in neighborhoods where whites are a clear majority. This majority is shrinking, to be sure, affected by the growing presence of immigrant minorities throughout the metropolis. Whites are still a two-thirds share of neighbors in the tracts where the average white in these immigrant-intensive metros.

Asians have the next highest level of exposure to whites, living in neighborhoods where on average there is a near-majority of white residents. This reflects the well-documented fact that Asians are only moderately segregated from whites, while they tend to avoid districts with black or Hispanic majorities. But segregation is part of the Asian experience, as Asians live in zones with much larger Asian populations and less white residents than do whites. And the key point here is that there is no "assimilation advantage" for Asians born in this country.

Blacks and Hispanics, regardless of nativity, live in neighborhoods with a minimal white presence, varying around 25-35%. The white share has dropped sharply in the last decade in Hispanics' neighborhoods, at the same time as these areas became more Hispanic. The disparity in racial composition between where white natives and black natives live in 2000 is 46%; between white and black immigrants it is almost the same, 44%. The disparity between white and Hispanic natives is a little smaller, and this reveals that Hispanics are less segregated from whites than are blacks. Yet this 38% gap is the same if we compare white and Hispanic immigrants.

These results are very consistent. Asian immigrants, to a degree, and black and Hispanic immigrants, to an even greater extent, live separately from the metropolitan white population, and this division is not very much due to their immigrant status. Residential separation falls mainly along racial and ethnic lines.

Social class differences among neighborhoods

Another way to assess immigrants' access to the mainstream is to look at their class composition. As indicators of social class we use the census tract's median household income (half of households earn more, half earn less than this amount) and percent of residents whose incomes fall below the poverty line.

Again we have to take into account very strong racial and ethnic differences. Table 7 shows that the average white in these metro areas lives in a neighborhood with a median income of over $60,000 and only 8.2% below the poverty line. Asians' neighborhoods are somewhat less affluent, but still very advantaged compared to blacks' and Hispanics' neighborhoods (median incomes of around $40,000 and nearly 20% poor). The overall racial/ethnic inequality was quite stable between 1990 and 2000.

Other studies have shown that these gaps are not very much affected by the higher incomes of whites and Asians, compared to blacks and Hispanics. For example, the average black household earning over $60,000 lives in a neighborhood with a higher poverty rate than a white household earning less than $60,000. Race trumps class as a determinant of access to more affluent neighborhoods.

Table 7. Economic standing in the neighborhoods of the average group member							
		Total		Native		Immigrant	
		1990	2000	1990	2000	1990	2000
Median household income	White	$54,702	$60,192	$54,767	$60,402	$53,815	$57,529
	Black	$36,605	$40,348	$36,219	$40,211	$39,963	$41,910
	Hispanic	$37,239	$39,728	$37,627	$40,644	$36,668	$38,549
	Asian	$51,998	$56,560	$54,896	$58,682	$50,471	$55,535
Percent below poverty line	White	8.0	8.2	8.0	8.1	9.1	10.0
	Black	21.0	19.1	21.4	19.3	17.6	17.1
	Hispanic	20.5	19.5	20.3	18.9	20.7	20.3
	Asian	11.4	11.5	10.0	10.9	12.2	11.8

Still, it is worth examining whether nativity has an independent effect. First, how much more advantaged in class composition are the neighborhoods where U.S.-born persons live, compared to immigrants? This is another way to think about spatial assimilation, as advancement in neighborhood quality that is not necessarily linked to living with whites. Second, how much is the overall gap between racial and ethnic groups (seen in the group totals) reduced when we compare natives to natives and immigrants to immigrants?

We can answer the first question using the 2000 values for natives vs. immigrants. Among whites, Hispanics, and Asians there is an advantage for natives: they live in neighborhoods that are about $2000-$3000 wealthier and have a poverty rate 1% or 2% lower. Among blacks, however, the advantage rests with immigrants.

This reversal of the expected native advantage among blacks is an important clue about race relations in the United States. Other analyses show that Afro-Caribbeans and immigrants from Africa have somewhat higher education and higher income than African Americans born in the U.S. In the labor market, and apparently also in the housing market, they appear to find greater opportunities than do other blacks. However, this will turn out to be a temporary advantage if their children and grandchildren do not manage to avoid falling to the African American average. After all, the assimilation model cuts in two directions: it predicts disadvantage for the immigrant generation but social advancement for the next.

Generational advancement in neighborhood quality for whites, Hispanics, and Asians is very weak in relation to the disparities across groups. For example, consider that immigrant Hispanics live in neighborhoods where residents earn $20,000 less than people in immigrant whites' neighborhoods, and the poverty rate twice as high. In this context the immigrant vs. native difference of $2,000 or 1 percentage point in the poverty rate has little practical effect. Hence for Hispanics the effect of ethnicity is much more important than status as an immigrant.

For Asians, the overall $3600 disadvantage between their neighborhoods and whites' neighborhoods (that is, $56,650 vs. $60,192) does recede to a disadvantage of about $1700 between white and Asian natives, or $2000 between white and Asian immigrants. Being an

immigrant makes a difference, and the large share of immigrants in the Asian population results in Asians living in slightly less affluent neighborhoods.

But the larger picture is that differences between whites and Asians are small to begin with, and the main message of Table 7 is the large gap between these two groups and blacks or Hispanics.

The effects of immigration

As powerful as the current wave of immigration has been, we can see that its influence on metropolitan residential patterns has been very localized – some parts of the country are relatively untouched, while some neighborhoods in certain areas have been entirely rebuilt and repopulated.

A key factor here is geographic region. The United States is bifurcated between those zones, mainly near major ports of entry, where immigrants are plentiful and other zones where native whites and blacks are the only visible groups. Immigration was perhaps more dispersed in the 19th Century when newcomers played a major role in settling the prairies. There may also be some centrifugal forces in play now. For example, secondary migrations are bringing Mexicans and Central Americans to more sections of the Midwest and South. But even now the principal routes of secondary migration are between the old immigrant centers – such as the two-way movements between New York and Los Angeles.

Immigration raises many kinds of issues at the local level. Providing services for a growing population is often difficult, even when growth has a mainly domestic origin; serving immigrants adds the dimension of language differences. There are also political impacts as new groups seek representation in the political system. People often wonder whether immigrants burden the welfare and healthcare systems because of their low wages or inability to find work. But immigrants are actually less likely to be unemployed than are natives of the same race and ethnicity, and their income levels are similar. Further, current legislation limits their access to social welfare programs.

Perhaps the major impact of immigration is that it changes the mix of racial and ethnic groups in a region. In an area like the San Francisco Bay Area, where a large share of immigrants is from Asia, immigration tends to lift up average education and income levels. In an area like Los Angeles where Mexicans are the majority of immigrants, the new population tends to have education and income levels that are below average. Newcomers find places in the labor force and in neighborhoods that generally match where previous generations of Americans from the same origins have fitted into the society. To be sure there is evidence of significant clustering of immigrants in certain neighborhoods. But the location and quality of these neighborhoods seem to be determined more by whether residents are white, black, Hispanic or Asian than by whether they are foreign-born.

Appendix: Metropolitan regions with more than 10% foreign-born residents, 2000

		Number foreign-born by race/ethnicity				
	% Foreign	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
1 Miami, FL	50.9%	1,147,765	67,416	91,355	921,533	32,245
2 Jersey City, NJ	38.5%	234,597	35,863	2,090	132,791	49,717
3 Los Angeles-Long Beach, CA	36.2%	3,449,444	434,957	3,842	2,084,055	890,461
4 San Jose, CA	34.1%	573,130	84,299	1,234	162,622	332,855
5 New York, NY	33.7%	3,139,647	738,108	508,721	977,814	736,490
6 San Francisco, CA	32.0%	554,819	108,929	1,186	155,488	293,036
7 Orange County, CA	29.9%	849,899	112,509	483	442,077	302,485
8 McAllen-Edinburg-Mission, TX	29.5%	168,215	2,516	24	163,045	2,735
9 Laredo, TX	29.0%	56,029	746	12	54,582	712
10 Salinas, CA	29.0%	116,559	10,410	0	89,726	18,738
11 El Paso, TX	27.4%	186,168	7,739	75	172,138	6,105
12 Bergen-Passaic, NJ	25.7%	352,592	117,487	4,428	120,309	93,821
13 Brownsville-Harlingen-San Benito, TX	25.6%	85,723	2,150	32	82,133	1,336
14 Fort Lauderdale, FL	25.3%	410,387	101,062	105,341	145,297	35,270
15 Merced, CA	24.8%	52,184	4,314	2	37,495	10,233
16 Yuma, AZ	24.0%	38,479	2,417	6	34,913	1,455
17 Oakland, CA	24.0%	573,144	84,985	2,216	188,624	301,848
18 Visalia-Tulare-Porterville, CA	22.6%	83,124	4,248	6	69,813	8,595
19 San Diego, CA	21.5%	606,254	98,218	1,185	314,625	202,341
20 Santa Barbara-Santa Maria-Lompoc, CA	21.2%	84,826	14,679	74	59,061	12,696
21 Fresno, CA	21.0%	193,470	12,223	140	138,544	43,103
22 Middlesex-Somerset-Hunterdon, NJ	20.8%	243,406	61,750	8,555	59,947	104,732
23 Ventura, CA	20.7%	155,913	23,246	131	103,440	32,292
24 Houston, TX	20.5%	854,669	77,073	4,705	569,355	181,243
25 Stamford-Norwalk, CT	20.4%	72,063	28,477	2,139	23,447	11,841
26 Yolo, CA	20.3%	34,171	6,068	51	17,298	11,030
27 Stockton-Lodi, CA	19.5%	109,812	8,744	5	59,298	43,862
28 Honolulu, HI	19.2%	168,246	10,535	927	4,828	204,988
29 Newark, NJ	19.0%	385,807	116,130	48,024	128,164	67,193
30 Riverside-San Bernardino, CA	18.8%	612,359	65,455	160	437,906	112,294
31 Las Cruces, NM	18.7%	32,623	1,430	0	29,900	1,279
32 Naples, FL	18.3%	46,071	11,327	2,162	27,839	1,335
33 Modesto, CA	18.3%	81,615	12,855	2	52,915	14,869
34 Santa Cruz-Watsonville, CA	18.2%	46,502	8,278	0	32,553	6,182
35 West Palm Beach-Boca Raton, FL	17.4%	196,852	60,159	31,010	76,024	15,689

Appendix: Metropolitan regions with more than 10% foreign-born residents, 2000 (continued)

		Number foreign-born by race/ethnicity				
	% Foreign	Total	White	Black	Hispanic	Asian
36 Chicago, IL	17.2%	1,425,978	410,397	13,043	668,185	307,275
37 Vallejo-Fairfield-Napa, CA	17.2%	88,983	11,654	46	40,070	41,621
38 Bakersfield, CA	16.9%	111,944	6,510	219	88,965	17,199
39 Washington, DC-MD-VA-WV	16.9%	832,016	160,604	55,034	265,171	286,842
40 Yakima, WA	16.9%	37,575	2,003	0	33,904	1,933
41 Dallas, TX	16.8%	591,169	55,098	3,882	399,114	119,574
42 Yuba City, CA	16.6%	23,159	1,760	14	12,314	9,498
43 Las Vegas, NV-AZ	16.5%	258,494	42,639	435	154,954	65,813
44 Boston, MA-NH	14.9%	508,279	202,081	53,202	88,691	134,211
45 Danbury, CT	14.7%	31,968	15,088	248	8,694	5,863
46 New Bedford, MA	14.5%	25,376	19,536	1,216	1,786	1,045
47 Nassau-Suffolk, NY	14.4%	396,939	135,769	29,134	129,221	79,397
48 Santa Rosa, CA	14.3%	65,726	14,545	4	39,555	12,134
49 Reno, NV	14.1%	47,993	7,786	11	28,345	12,753
50 Phoenix-Mesa, AZ	14.1%	457,483	78,799	2,918	318,093	58,356
51 Sacramento, CA	13.9%	225,940	57,909	2,271	67,237	102,489
52 Trenton, NJ	13.9%	48,659	16,007	3,815	12,901	13,092
53 Seattle-Bellevue-Everett, WA	13.7%	331,912	101,888	5,690	48,508	182,847
54 Richland-Kennewick-Pasco, WA	12.8%	24,482	3,472	1	17,664	3,455
55 Bridgeport, CT	12.4%	57,165	25,597	10,315	10,976	9,136
56 Austin-San Marcos, TX	12.2%	152,834	20,202	1,327	95,068	36,578
57 Providence-Fall River-Warwick, RI-MA	12.0%	142,784	65,362	6,388	40,879	21,313
58 Orlando, FL	12.0%	197,119	44,465	27,164	75,029	39,884
59 Tucson, AZ	11.9%	100,050	18,952	520	66,388	15,213
60 Salem, OR	11.5%	39,993	7,742	122	26,876	5,305
61 Lowell, MA-NH	11.4%	34,448	11,211	2,766	3,543	17,447
62 Fort Worth-Arlington, TX	11.4%	193,473	21,203	2,505	121,473	45,306
63 Denver, CO	11.1%	233,096	50,637	2,700	128,363	51,790
64 Portland-Vancouver, OR-WA	10.8%	208,075	65,579	1,556	69,850	74,629
65 Lawrence, MA-NH	10.8%	42,696	12,250	291	22,233	6,793
66 Atlanta, GA	10.3%	423,105	73,731	29,766	171,960	116,637
67 Bryan-College Station, TX	10.3%	15,636	2,326	350	7,920	5,118
68 Hartford, CT	10.2%	120,355	60,633	26,610	14,920	22,630
69 San Antonio, TX	10.2%	161,924	17,521	213	123,217	21,689

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